

RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

IBERO-AMERICAN ROAD SAFETY PROGRAMME/OISEVI

These recommendations were approved at the 8th General Assembly of the Ibero-American Road Safety Observatory (OISEVI), held in Madrid on 6-8 May 2019.

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SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

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1. History

Over the course of history, the cities and villages of all civilisations have always been the drivers of social and economic development. If there is one intrinsic feature common to all urban settings, it is the presence of pedestrians or people on foot.

One characteristic we all share, wherever we were born or now live, whatever our gender, age or social standing, is our status as pedestrians. Nonetheless, according to the IADB (2016) and ECLAC (2017), mobility patterns differ according to gender in the Latin American context, with women moving around on foot and using public transport more often than men, who tend to use cars or motorcycles. These patterns are also seen in Spanish cities, according to the ATM (2018), CRTM (2014) and OMM (2019).

Although patterns of mobility on foot vary according to gender, this is an aspect affecting society as a whole, which must not be left without proper management or protection. The building of safe, accessible, clean and user-friendly cities where walking is an everyday, risk-free activity must not simply be a wish list, but a priority objective.

From major metropolises to small rural settlements, walkers will, to paraphrase Antonio Machado "make their path by walking". The different public authorities with responsibility in this matter have the duty to ensure that this path is a peaceful and safe one.

In the words of John Butcher, founder of Walk21, "Walking is the first thing an infant wants to do, and the last that an old person wants to give up. Walking is as natural as breathing".

Pedestrians are entitled to live in a safe and healthy environment, specifically designed and devised for them, granting them unrestricted access to and enjoyment of public spaces, under conditions that properly guarantee their health, safety and well-being.

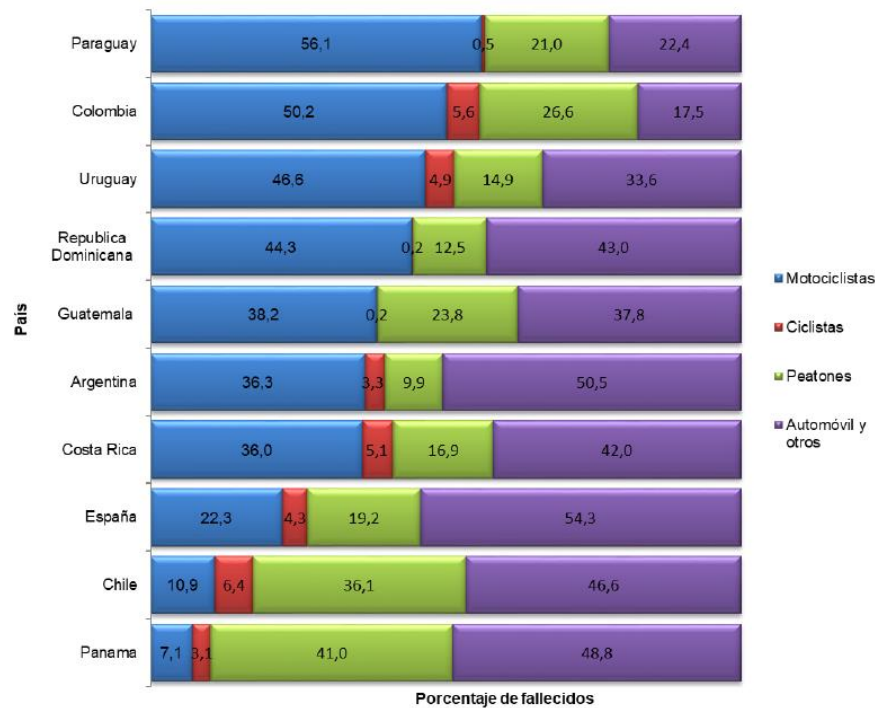
The countries of Ibero-America, acknowledging the need to implement the aforementioned basic principle, must register their clear and manifest desire to collaborate, within their specific circumstances, and to the extent of their competences and responsibilities, in adopting all actions that would help to effectively realise and implement this principle.

We should specifically encourage the implementation of the actions listed in subsection 3, with the goal of improving and safeguarding pedestrian rights and safety.

2. Current accident rate situation

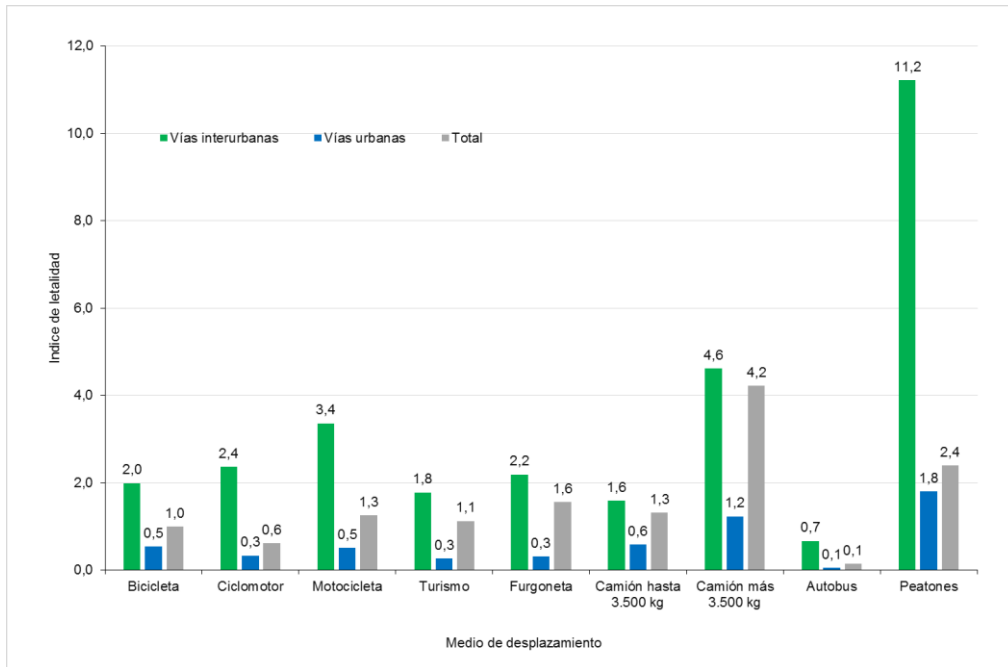
At present, more than 110,000 people die each year in Ibero-America in traffic accidents (WHO, 2018). It is estimated that across the region as a whole, pedestrians account for more than 20% of fatalities, although this proportion is higher than 40% in countries such as Panama (OISEVI, 2019).

FIGURE 1 PERCENTAGE OF FATALITIES IN TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS BY USER TYPE AND COUNTRY IN 2017 (OISEVI, 2019)



Alongside cyclists and motorcyclists, pedestrians make up the group known as vulnerable users. If they are involved in an accident, such users are more likely to suffer fatal or serious injury. According to the available statistical data, the mortality index, defined as the number of fatalities per 100 victims, is higher among pedestrians than any other user group. Within towns and cities, the index is six times higher in the case of pedestrians than car occupants.

FIGURE 2 MORTALITY INDEX, DEFINED AS THE NUMBER OF FATALITIES PER 100 VICTIMS. SPAIN, 2017 (DGT, 2018)



The natural vulnerability of pedestrians is heightened by the fact that a great many of them are elderly people, who typically use cars less, and make more trips on foot or by public transport.

3. Recommendations to improve pedestrian safety

In order to improve and safeguard pedestrian rights and safety, the countries of Ibero-America are called on to adopt the recommendations listed below:

1 DISTRIBUTE PUBLIC SPACE MORE FAIRLY, AND ESTABLISH HIERARCHICAL USAGE TO GIVE PEDESTRIANS PRIORITY

Urban public space must be distributed more fairly among all means of transport, improving the design of streets and road signs to guarantee harmonious coexistence. Sustainable mobility and road safety plans must be based on a hierarchical allocation of space, giving priority to more sustainable means of travel, in particular pedestrians.

2 DEFINE A BASIC NETWORK OF SAFE PEDESTRIAN ROUTES AND PROMOTE PEDESTRIAN-ONLY SPACES

A basic network of convenient, attractive and safe pedestrian routes must be defined, serving to link up the origin and destination points for trips on foot, without circuitous diversions or unnecessary waits. It is particularly important to ensure pedestrian links to public transport stops and stations, and also to workplaces, schools, shops, leisure and cultural facilities, bearing in mind that the maximum acceptable distance on foot to a public transport stop is 300-500 m (ITF, 2012). The creation of a basic network of pedestrian routes must examine the possibility of pedestrianising central or key public spaces of municipalities, or restricting motor vehicle access by non-residents, creating meeting places for locals and visitors. This network must in turn receive appropriate maintenance of its infrastructure, including vehicle crossings.

This basic pedestrian network of safe routes must be defined within an urban sustainable mobility and road safety plan that encourages the use of public transport and safe, active ways of getting around. In this regard, mobility surveys are a basic tool to understand and monitor modal distribution and the contribution of mobility on foot in municipalities, while furthermore serving as an initial input when drawing up the plan.

3 CALM TRAFFIC AND SET SPEED LIMITS THAT ARE SAFE FOR PEDESTRIANS.

The influence of car traffic speed on pedestrian safety has been widely demonstrated. According to international studies (ITF, 2018), the risk of a pedestrian being killed is five times higher if they are run over at 50 rather than 30 km/h. International recommendations based on the *safe system* approach (ITF, 2018) recommend a speed limit of 30 km/h on streets where there is considerable coexistence of cars and vulnerable users. On streets without pavements, where all users share the same road platform, the speed limit should be even lower.

Traffic calming is particularly important in residential and shopping areas and in the vicinity of schools and health centres. To this end, the recommendation is to apply traffic-calming techniques to reduce vehicle speed in line with the limit set for each roadway.

The necessary control mechanisms must likewise be established to ensure compliance with the safe speed limits that have been set.

4 LAY PAVEMENTS OF SUFFICIENT WIDTH TO ENSURE THAT EVERYONE CAN MOVE AROUND INDEPENDENTLY AND SAFELY.

It must be ensured that pedestrian routes have a sufficient usable and obstacle-free width, allowing for non-discriminatory use and independent and continuous transit by all, irrespective of their characteristics and conditions (people with a disability, the elderly, children, etc.).

Aside from minimum pavement dimensions, the quality of pedestrian routes is achieved with more generous dimensions, capable of accommodating urban furniture and tree planting, while also offering a degree of balance between the dimensions of pavement and roadway.

5 REGULATE VEHICLE TRAFFIC AND PARKING IN SPACES INTENDED FOR PEDESTRIANS.

Pavements are often the setting of conflict between pedestrians and vehicles which drive or perform parking manoeuvres on them. To avoid such conflict, the use of pavements by different users must be regulated, restricting vehicle traffic of all kinds and prioritising parking on the roadway for all means of transport (including bicycles, scooters, other means of personal mobility and the corresponding loan systems). In this regard, the need is not only for regulation, but also creation of the necessary control mechanisms to ensure compliance.

6 FACILITATE ROAD CROSSING BY PEDESTRIANS.

A substantial proportion of pedestrians are run over away from pedestrian crossings. Many such accidents are caused not so much by incorrect behaviour by the pedestrians, but by the way that many streets are configured, forcing people to walk a long way between pedestrian crossings.

To resolve this problem, the recommendation is to establish sufficiently regular pedestrian crossings, located at points that serve to minimise the distance required in order to cross. This will facilitate pedestrian transit and safety, and respect the natural route that pedestrians would follow.

As for the width of the crossing, it is not advisable for pedestrians to need to cover more than 8-10 metres of carriageway, so as to avoid having to cross more than two or three lanes of traffic at a time (Sanz Alduán, A., 2016). The roadway can be narrowed at the crossing by widening the pavement into the carriageway area, or otherwise by establishing pedestrian islands (ITF, 2012; Sanz Alduán, A., 2016).

To ensure that the basic network of pedestrian routes has as much continuity as possible where it crosses over vehicle traffic, the recommendation is to raise the pedestrian crossing to the pavement level, making it easier for pedestrians to cross and forcing vehicles to pass over a small ramp or raised section to continue on their way.

7 ENSURE GOOD VISIBILITY AT PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS.

Good visibility must be ensured at pedestrian crossings, guaranteeing that the area alongside crossings is free of vegetation, urban furniture, parked vehicles, rubbish bins or any other element which could block the crossing or reduce pedestrian visibility, irrespective of the characteristics and conditions of the crossing. In cases where there is no traffic light, it should be ensured that parked vehicles are sufficiently distant from the pedestrian crossing.

8 IMPROVE THE DESIGN AND CONFIGURATION OF TRAFFIC LIGHTS.

In order to ensure that all pedestrians can cross comfortably and safely at crossings with traffic lights, the following recommendations are made, irrespective of the characteristics in question:

- Properly regulate the traffic light timing, to ensure that older people or those with reduced mobility can cross without difficulty.
- Ideally, position the traffic lights ahead of the pedestrian crossings, to prevent vehicles from encroaching on them, thereby making it easier to cross and reducing the risk of pedestrians being run over. If this is not possible, position the vehicle stop line more than one metre from the pedestrian crossing.

9 CONDUCT EDUCATION, AWARENESS AND SENSITIVITY CAMPAIGNS.

Such campaigns must focus both on pedestrians themselves and on all other road users. Their content must focus on the need for appropriate coexistence, the vulnerability of pedestrians, and the main higher-risk conduct observed in the different types of user.

Within the school context, road safety education must be included within the curriculum and in integrated teaching throughout all educational stages, not only in terms of knowledge, but also the acquisition of habits and attitudes to foster appropriate behaviour by road users.

Monitoring and control campaigns must also be conducted to detect actions in breach of the regulations by vehicle drivers, in particular speeding, use of mobile phones, and consumption of alcohol and other drugs.

10 SIGN UP TO THE INTERNATIONAL CHARTER FOR WALKING.

The International Charter for Walking (Walk 21, 2006), launched in Melbourne in 2006, is an initiative which arose out of the international conferences organised by the association Walk21. It has since become the international standard in terms of mobility, road safety and walking culture. So far it has received more than 5,000 signatures, including those of 500 municipal mayors.

Governments, states, provinces and municipalities of the Ibero-American countries are advised to sign up to the Charter

4. Other recommendations

Aside from the above recommendations, directly linked to improved road safety for travel on foot, the recommendation is to conduct periodic mobility surveys, in order to ascertain and monitor modal distribution in municipalities. This will provide information on the proportion of all trips being completed on foot.

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